

REPORT

NATIVE PAPERS

FOR THE

Week ending the 26th March 1898.

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LIST OF NEWSPAPERS.

No.	Names of newspapers.	Place of publication.	Reported number of subscribers.	Dates of papers received and examined for the week.	REMARKS.
BENGALI.					
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Bangavasi" ...	Calcutta	25,000	19th March, 1898.	
2	"Basumati" ...	Ditto	15,000	24th February and 3rd March 1898.	
3	"Hitaishi" ...	Ditto	800	1st and 22nd March 1898.	
4	"Hitavadi" ...	Ditto	About 4,000	18th March 1898.	
5	"Mihir-o-Sudhakar" ...	Ditto	1,600	18th ditto.	
6	"Samay" ...	Ditto	3,000	18th ditto.	
7	"Samutthan" ...	Ditto	...	23rd ditto.	
8	"Sanjivani" ...	Ditto	3,000	19th ditto.	
9	"Som Prakash" ...	Ditto	1,000	21st ditto.	
10	"Sulabh Samachar" ...	Ditto	.....	19th ditto.	
<i>Daily.</i>					
1	"Banga Vidya Prakashika"	Ditto	200	19th and 21st to 25th March, 1898.	
2	"Dainik-o-Samachar Chandra-drika."	Ditto	1,000	19th to 22nd March, 1898.	
3	"Samvad Prabhakar" ...	Ditto	2,000	19th and 21st to 23rd March, 1898.	
4	"Samvad Purnachandrodaya"	Ditto	200	18th, 19th, and 21st to 24th March, 1898.	
5	"Sulabh Dainik" ...	Ditto	Read by 3,000		
HINDI.					
<i>Fortnightly.</i>					
1	"Marwari Gazette" ...	Ditto	400		
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Bharat Mitra" ...	Ditto	2,000	21st March, 1898.	
2	"Hindi Bangavasi" ...	Ditto	6,500	21st ditto.	
PERSIAN.					
<i>Weekly.</i>					
1	"Hablul Mateen" ...	Ditto	500	21st ditto.	
2	"Mefta-hur-safar" ...	Ditto	.....	

No.	Names of Newspapers.	Place of publication.	Reported number of subscribers.	Dates of papers received and examined for the week.	REMARKS.
URDU.					
Weekly.					
1	"Darussaltanat and Urdu Guide."	Ditto	320	17th March 1898.	
2	"General and Gauharisafi"	Ditto	330		
Tri-weekly.					
1	"Nusrat-ul-Islam"	Ditto	.....	
Daily.					
1	"Rozana-e-Kalkatta"	Ditto	.....	18th to 20th, and 22nd to 24th March, 1898.	
BENGALI.					
BURDWAN DIVISION.					
Fortnightly.					
1	"Pallivasi"	Kalna	475	20th March 1898.	
Weekly.					
1	"Bankura Darpan"	Bankura	572	23rd ditto.	
2	"Burdwan Sanjivani"	Burdwan	240	15th ditto.	
3	"Chinsura Vartavaha"	Chinsura	400		
4	"Education Gazette"	Hooghly	1,350	18th ditto.	
BENGALI.					
PRESIDENCY DIVISION.					
Weekly.					
1	"Murshidabad Hitaishi"	Murshidabad	655	16th ditto.	
2	"Pratikal"	Ditto	603		
URIYA.					
ORISSA DIVISION.					
Weekly.					
1	"Sambalpur Hitaishini"	Bamra in the Central Provinces.	.....	.....	This paper is said to have some circulation in the Division, but the number of subscribers could not be ascertained.
2	"Samvad Vahika"	Balasore	150		
3	"Uriya and Navasamvad"	Ditto	309		
4	"Utkal Dipika"	Cuttack	400		
HINDI.					
PATNA DIVISION.					
Monthly.					
1	"Bihar Bandhu"	Bankipur	About 600		
Weekly.					
1	"Aryavarta"	Dinapur	1,000		
URDU.					
Weekly.					
1	"Al Punch"	Bankipur	500	18th March, 1898.	
2	"Gaya Punch"	Gaya	400	14th ditto.	
BENGALI.					
BHAGALPUR DIVISION.					
Fortnightly.					
1	"Gaur Varta"	Malda	.....	17th ditto.	
BENGALI.					
RAJSHAHI DIVISION.					
Weekly.					
1	"Hindu Ranjika"	Boalia, Rajshahi	243	.....	This paper is not regularly published for want of type.
2	"Rangpur Diprakash"	Kakina, Rangpur	180	10th March 1898.	
HINDI.					
Monthly.					
1	"Darjeeling Mission ke Masik Samachar Patrika."	Darjeeling	300		

No.	Names of Newspapers.	Place of publication.	Reported number of subscribers.	Dates of papers received and examined for the week.	REMARKS.
BENGALI.		DACCA DIVISION.			
Fortnightly.					
1	"Faridpur Hitaishini" ...	Faridpur ...	755	13th March, 1898.	
2	"Kasipur Nivasi" ...	Kasipur, Barisal ...	315		
Weekly.					
1	"Barisal Hitaishi" ...	Barisal ...	300	13th and 20th March, 1898.	
2	"Charu Mihir" ...	Mymensingh ...	900	14th March, 1898.	
3	"Dacca Prakash" ...	Dacca ...	2,400	20th ditto.	
4	"Sanjay" ...	Faridpur ...	.....	18th ditto.
5	"Saraswat Patra" ...	Dacca ...	About 500	19th ditto.	
ENGLISH AND BENGALI.					
Weekly.					
	"Dacca Gazette" ...	Dacca ...	500	21st ditto.	
BENGALI.		CHITTAGONG DIVISION.			
Fortnightly.					
1	"Tripura Hitaishi" ...	Comilla ...	450	Falgun, 1st fortnight, 1304, B. S.	
Weekly.					
1	"Jyoti" ...	Chittagong ...	.....	17th March 1898.
2	"Sansodhini" ...	Ditto ...	120	16th ditto.	
BENGALI.		ASSAM.			
1	"Paridarsak" ...	Sylhet ...	.....	Falgun, 2nd fortnight 1304, B. S.
2	"Silchar" ...	Silchar, Cachar ...	340		

II.—HOME ADMINISTRATION.

(a)—Police.

A correspondent of the *Kasipur Nivasi* of the 13th March complains

KASIPUR NIVASI,
March 13th, 1898.

Wild buffaloes in a village in the Barisal district.

of the havoc which is being made by wild buffaloes in Bidyanandapur within the jurisdiction of the Mehendiganj thana in the Barisal district. The animals are destroying the sugar-cane, *til*, hemp and other crops. Lately, one of them attacked and severely wounded one Kali Charan Mandal of the village. The Government has checked murders by withdrawing all licenses for firearms, but it should devise some means to put down the depredations of wild beasts. At least, some *shikaris* should be sent down to the village.

2. The *Barisal Hitaishi* of the 13th March protests against the lawless conduct of those men in Barisal who take advantage of the *dol* festival to oppress lower

BARISAL HITAIISHI,
March 13th, 1898.

Holi oppression in Barisal.

class people in the name of amusement, and asks the District Magistrate to do something for the protection of the latter. The treatment generally accorded to boatmen, carters, etc., is simply calculated to offend and annoy them.

3. The *Sansodhini* of the 16th March suggests that the police should not permit *nautches* to be held at Kaporipati in Chittagong, as they generally give rise to troubles. It is

SANSODHINI,
March 16th, 1898.

Prohibition of *nautches*.

pointed out that, for these troubles, the *nautches* had to be suspended for several years, and it is for the first time after the suspension that they have been held this year and have, as usual, resulted in disorder.

4. A Comilla correspondent writes as follows to the *Jyoti* of the 17th March:—

JYOTI,
March 17th, 1898.

Destructive fire at Comilla.

On the 11th March, a fire broke out in Comilla shortly after 2 o'clock; and though four or five thousand people assembled on the spot, it spread on all sides till 260 huts were burnt down. Never before was there such a destructive fire in the town. Most of the officials and lawyers have been rendered homeless. The town of Comilla belongs to His Highness the Maharaja of Tippera, who does not grant permanent leases, thus making it difficult for people to erect *pukka* buildings. The newly-arrived District Superintendent of Police, Mr. Maxwell, was not on the scene of conflagration. His subordinates too did very little to check the progress of the fire. They simply perambulated the streets in their uniform, like so many sightseers. Only one police officer, Babu Jitendra Nath Ghosh, the newly-appointed Town Sub-Inspector, made strenuous efforts to save the property of the people. He deserves the sincere thanks of all. The District Magistrate at first made an attempt to reach the spot on his bicycle, but the dense crowd not permitting any further advance of the vehicle, he returned and made no second effort, although his presence would have been most salutary, considering that a nod from him would have been of more real service than the exhortations of others.

Referring to the above, the editor remarks that fires have become the order of the day. On the 11th March, the house of one Mr. Robertson, at Chittagong, was burnt down, resulting in the loss of Government currency notes for Rs. 5,000, and other valuable documents. A notice has been issued by the Commissioner and Municipal authorities that a punitive police is to be quartered in the town if any further cases of incendiarism are reported. Last year the watchfulness of the police and the Magistrate served to strike terror into the hearts of incendiaries, and they kept quiet. It is not clear why the same should not be the case this year, and why it should be necessary to station a punitive police which, while leaving untouched the real incendiaries, will place an additional burden on those who may lose their all in the fire.

5. The *Sanjivani* of the 19th March says that a reign of terror has been established in Champatala in the heart of

SANJIVANI,
March 19th, 1898.

Badmashes in Champatala, Calcutta.

Calcutta, by a band of *badmashes*, who not only cut jokes at the expense of helpless women, but do not even hesitate to outrage their modesty if an opportunity offers itself. They generally frequent the Champatala tank and the neighbourhood in gangs. A few days ago, a gentleman had to remove his family owing to the rowdyism of these men, who took to throwing brickbats into his house. Everyone knew of their practices, but no one dared to remonstrate with them for

fear of being molested in their turn. The writer hopes that the authorities will hold a sifting enquiry into these allegations and protect the people of Champatala from these pests of society. Otherwise respectable householders will be compelled to leave the locality.

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
March 20th, 1898.

6. The *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 20th March complains that Lawlessness in Champatala, Champatala and Okhil Mistry's Lane, Calcutta, are notorious haunts of *badmashes*. The compound of the Champatala tank is their rendezvous. The carriage-stand to the west of the tank is also a source of nuisance. The *badmashes*, among whom there are many who have been in jail, have proved a terror to the whole neighbourhood, and they do not even hesitate to outrage the modesty of helpless women who happen to pass by the tank. It is to be hoped that the Police Commissioner and the Inspector of the Muchipara thana will take steps to put a stop to the oppression committed by these *badmashes* upon innocent people.

(b)—Working of the Courts.

GAUR VARTA,
March 17th, 1898.

7. Writing to the *Gaurvarta* of the 17th March, a correspondent points out that the arrangements for the administration of justice in Malda are susceptible of much improvement. Appeals from civil and criminal courts in Malda lie to the District and Sessions Judge of Rajshahi. So, as the number of cases is daily increasing, this arrangement leads to much inconvenience to the parties and loss of revenue to the Government. Malda has grown to be an important district and should have its own staff of District Officers. But if this proposal be not acceptable, on account of the extra cost its adoption may entail, the following arrangements may be made to remove the grievances complained of:—

1. The local munsifs may be safely empowered, as in certain other districts, to try suits to the value of Rs. 2,000.

2. The Sessions Judge may come here to hold the Criminal Sessions six times a year instead of four, entertain and dispose of criminal appeals, and, in case of civil appeals, only entertain them, leaving them to be decided during his next visit.

3. The munsifs may, with advantage, be empowered to grant relief under the Insolvent Debtors' Act.

HITAVADI,
March 18th, 1898.

8. A correspondent of the *Hitavadi* of the 18th March complains that the removal of the Sahajadpur munsifi in the Pabna district to Sirajganj has been attended with inconvenience to the public and pecuniary loss to Government. The number of suits has fallen off, and people are suffering from the inconvenience of travelling and accommodation. Both food and water are scarce in Sirajganj.

PALLIVASI,
March 20th, 1898.

9. The *Pallivasi* of the 20th March complains that the Additional Munsif of Kalna fixes more part-heard cases for one day than he can possibly dispose of, which results in too frequent adjournments and puts the parties to great inconvenience, expense, and difficulty. The permanent Munsif, on the other hand, compensates for this, as it were, by too much expedition, which is equally bad for the suitors who appear before him.

(c)—Jails.

HITAVADI,
March 18th, 1898.

10. The *Hitavadi* of the 18th March contains a poem written by its editor in jail, describing prison scenes.

(d)—Education.

SANSODHINI,
March 16th, 1898.

11. The *Sansodhini* of the 16th March takes exception to the appointment of Mr. S. Percival, a brother of Professor Percival of the Presidency College, as Third Master of the Chittagong Collegiate School, on a salary of Rs. 50 per month, which would have sufficed to induce a graduate to enter Government service. It is said that Mr. S. Percival, on the day of his

joining the appointment, used expressions towards the Pandit which are employed in speaking with inferiors. It is not well, says the writer, to make race or creed distinctions.

12. The same paper draws the attention of the Principal of the Chittagong College to the laxity of discipline obtaining in the College Hostel. It is said that the boarders leave the premises at night and do what they like.

SANSODHINI,
March 16th, 1898.

Laxity of discipline in the Chittagong College Hostel.

On the occasion of *Pancham Dol*, they were, indeed, present at a *nautch* party in Kaporipati.

13. The *Sanjay* of the 18th March regrets that Babu Jagabandhu Bhadra, Head Master of the Faridpur Zilla School, has been suddenly ordered to retire from the Service. As the gentleman is said to be still able to conduct

SANJAY,
March 18th, 1898.

Retirement of the present Head Master, Faridpur Zilla School.

his duties satisfactorily, it would have been better to give him another extension.

14. The *Hitavadi* of the 18th March says that the Sanskrit Course for the Entrance Examination, published by the Calcutta University, is a disgrace to it. That Course has always been wretchedly edited. If the University is so solicitous of pecuniary gain, why does it not publish text-books on all subjects for all University Examinations?

HITAVADI,
March 18th, 1898.

The new *Pravesika*.

Again, with a view to write a key to the new Sanskrit Course, a Pandit addressed, on the 20th September last, the following questions to the Registrar of the University:—

- (1) What pieces will be included in the Sanskrit Course for this year?
- (2) When will it be published?
- (3) Whether any key-maker will be supplied with files of it?

To these questions the following reply was vouchsafed by the Assistant Registrar on the 22nd idem:—

Will be published shortly.
No.

The Pandit applied to the publishers, Messrs. S. K. Lahiri and Company, with no better result. The book was published on the 22nd February, and the very next day two keys, by two different key-makers, came out. How could those keys be published so soon if the key-makers were not supplied with files?

15. The *Sanjivani* of the 19th March contains a critique on the *Palasir Juddha* by Babu Nabin Chandra Sen. The writer says that, though there are many good points in the book, it also contains many faulty passages. Indeed, it bears evidence of both learning and ignorance, of both thoughtfulness and thoughtlessness.

SANJIVANI,
March 19th, 1898.

A school edition of the book has been published with the approval of the Central Text-Book Committee, for the use of the candidates for the Middle Vernacular Examination of this year and the next. The first three cantos of this revised edition, which form the prescribed Course, are full of grammatical and other errors.

The writer then gives a long list of words and expressions which, he says, are wrong, and concludes with the following remarks:—There is one advantage in prescribing a text-book so full of mistakes as the *Palasir Juddha*. The students will not have to consult any other book to learn the art of correcting errors. Have the Committee retained so many mistakes in the book with this object in view?

16. The *Saraswat Patra* of the 19th March is glad to hear that, on the occasion of his last visit to Dacca, Dr. Martin inspected the records of the old *Saraswat Samaj*, from the time of its establishment, and modified his previous order so far as to express his willingness to accept the decision which the Commissioner of the Division might arrive at in the matter of the quarrel between the two Samajes.

SARASWAT PATRA,
March 19th, 1898.

The question of the *Saraswat Samaj* of Dacca.

17. The *Pallivasi* of the 20th March has the following:—Our alien Government never neglects Sanskrit, and spends a large sum year after year for the encouragement of Sanskrit learning. Not only the pupils, but the Professors as well, receive rewards, a good arrangement, no doubt, which has but one drawback. The

PALLIVASI,
March 20th, 1898.

Rewards to *tol* students.

money prizes are distributed in the same proportion among the successful students in the different subjects. This is hardly just and consistent, considering that, while it takes a student fifteen years to learn the *Nyay* philosophy, one can finish the *Sankhya* and other branches of Sanskrit learning, in two years. If some larger reward were offered to *Nyay* students, it would encourage the study of that difficult *Sastra*. True, Maharaja Bahadur Sir Jotendra Mohan gives a golden ornament (*Kayur*) every year to the most meritorious *Nyay* student, but that should not certainly interfere with the distribution of the Government rewards.

DACCA PRAKASH,
March 20th, 1898.

18. The *Dacca Prakash* of the 20th March praises Dr. Martin for his frankness in acknowledging his own mistake and trying to rectify it. He had formed an unfavourable opinion about one of the rival Saraswat Samajes in Dacca, and expressed himself in favour of the other. During his recent visit to Dacca, however, he had occasion and opportunity to examine the papers of the former Samaj, and at once cancelled his own order, forwarding the case to the Commissioner of Dacca for his opinion, and promising to abide by the latter's decision. Such frankness on his part deserves the gratitude of the people.

DACCA GAZETTE,
March 21st, 1898.

19. The *Dacca Gazette* of the 21st March complains of the stiffness and unsuitability of the questions set in the last Entrance Examination. Some of the questions on History were identical with those set in the M. A. Examination last year. It is said that during his recent visit to Dacca, the Director of Public Instruction enquired of the teachers of the High School what they thought of the Entrance Examination questions, which goes to show that those who take any interest in the welfare of the student community, have been surprised at the stiffness of the questions.

SAMUTTHAN,
March 23rd, 1898.

20. The *Samutthan* of the 23rd March speaks highly of Sir Alexander Mackenzie for establishing Agricultural classes in connection with the Sibpur Engineering College, and for the promise of guaranteed appointments made by His Honour. It is agriculture alone on which the Indians will have mainly to depend for livelihood, in view of the fact that Europeans and Eurasians are gradually monopolising even the lower ranks of the Service, and that it is not possible to compete with Europeans in arts or manufactures.

SAMUTTHAN.

21. The same paper observes that the recent events in Calcutta and Bombay have clearly shown that the illiterate masses may become violent and rise against the authorities without being incited by newspaper articles or public speeches. No code of drastic laws will ever put a stop to this. It is education, the improvement of the masses by education, which alone can achieve this end. The fanatical or the ignorant can hardly be restrained by the threat of imprisonment, transportation or death. Many believe that, under the English Government, education has made great progress. Indeed, this may be true in respect of certain communities, but it must be conceded that the labouring classes are worse off to-day than they ever were before in respect of education. They have now very little leisure, and though a few of them may have learnt the alphabet, they can hardly be said to have any education. Formerly, though the labourers never learnt the A B C, they had sufficient time for educating themselves. It is true that those who are willing may receive education, but the Government should make provisions, for a few years at least, for the education of every man, whether willing or unwilling. It cannot be a just doctrine that the Government should not interfere with the liberty of the people with a view to remove the ignorance which leads them to commit riots and die an ignominious death on the gallows. The Penal Code will not serve the purpose of putting an end to riots. The ignorance which has led to all the catastrophes that befell India in recent times, cannot be removed by the Penal Code. It is education alone which can do it.

(e)—Local Self-Government and Municipal Administration.

22. A Raniganj correspondent of the *Burdwan Sanjivani* of the 15th March apprehends scarcity of water in the town this year, as the municipal tank, known as the Sastigaria, hardly derives any supply from the well in front of the telegraph office, through the pipe which, it seems, has been blocked somewhere. Last year all the tanks in the town were more or less full, and the want of drinking-water was not much felt. This year, however, Rajarband and other tanks and wells having all but dried up, the authorities should take steps to provide the rate-payers of Raniganj with pure drinking-water.
23. The *Jyoti* of the 17th March suggests that the temporary hospital at Sitakunda in the Chittagong district should be maintained till the end of the Bengali year, as a large influx of pilgrims is expected on the Asokastami day, when cholera may possibly break out.
24. A correspondent of the *Hitavadi* of the 18th March complains that Musalmans living by the side of the Dapunia road within the Mymensingh Municipality are in the habit of slaughtering cows by the public road to the great annoyance of their Hindu neighbours. The bones of the slaughtered animals are carried into Hindu houses by dogs and jackals. They also emit a dreadful stench at places. Government is requested to fix a place outside the town for cow-slaughter.
25. The *Bangavasi* of the 19th March writes that the Subdivisional Officer of Meherpur, in the Nadia district, has issued an order requiring the villagers in his jurisdiction to clear jungle in their villages. This jungle-clearing is, no doubt, intended as a plague-preventive measure, but what if the trees and plants cut down rot and poison the atmosphere with their obnoxious odour? Whence, moreover, are the poor villagers to get the money to pay for jungle-clearing? Whence, again, are they to get their fuel-supply if the jungle is cleared?
26. Speaking of the election of Municipal Commissioners for Calcutta, the *Sanjivani* of the 19th March remarks that the hot season has set in in right earnest, and cholera has already made its unwelcome appearance. This is just the time when particular attention should be paid to the sanitation of the town. The roads in the northern division of the town are, however, almost impassable, owing to the clouds of dust that envelop them—a state of things which does not obtain in the southern portion where the Europeans reside. Here, even lanes and alleys are daily and properly watered by *bhisties*, but in the northern division of the town, even the most important roads, such as College Street and Cornwallis Street, are neglected, the watering arrangements being very imperfect. With the exception of the few places where the Commissioners or the higher Municipal officers reside, the streets in the northern portion of the town are, at best, perfunctorily watered. The sweeping arrangements, too, admit of much improvement. The streets are, at present, swept between the hours of seven and eight, much to the discomfort of the passers-by. The sweeping might very well be done before daybreak. Last year, during the plague scare, the town wore a bright look, but it is again getting shabby and uncleanly, as before.
27. The *Barisal Hitaishi* of the 20th March says that tanks are fast drying up, and that in many villages water is becoming scarce. If, therefore, there be no rain shortly, water-scarcity will prevail in the district, as in last year.

(g)—Railways and Communications, including Canals and Irrigation.

28. The *Choru Mihir* of the 14th March says that the Dacca-Mymensingh line crosses three, and the Jamalpur line, now under construction, five of the principal thoroughfares in Mymensingh, cutting up the town in two. The vendors of green vegetables and other eatables, who have, for the most part,

to cross the railway line in coming to town, are necessarily delayed at the crossing on account of the frequent shunting and passing of trains, and incur the risk of being run over. These evils will be aggravated when the Jamalpur line is opened to traffic. Considering that Municipal land has been taken up by the lines, and that the people have to put up with inconvenience, the Municipality should request the railway authorities to build an overbridge over the most important and crowded of these thoroughfares.

MIHIR-O-SUDHAKAR,
March 18th, 1898.

29. A correspondent urges, in the *Mihir-o-Sudhakar* of the 18th March, the necessity of constructing a two-mile road from the Melki station, on the Bengal Provincial Railway, to Naudingram, for the inhabitants of Naudingram, Bhotur, Manipur, Horal, Daspur, Rameswarpur and Chandpur, who have now to travel five or six miles to reach the Boinchi station on the East Indian Railway, instead of coming to Melki.

SANJAY,
March 18th, 1898.

30. The *Sanjay* of the 18th March says that, thanks to the interest evinced in the project by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the branch line from Rajbati to Faridpur has been taken in hand and promises to be completed in another five or six months. The Govindpur Canal being the sole means of water communication with the town of Faridpur, it is to be expected that the bridge to be constructed over the canal will be of such a height as to make it possible for large country boats, in even the rainy season, to pass under it without any difficulty; otherwise the trade of the town will be materially hampered.

SANJAY.

31. The same paper observes that the produce of the southern portion of the Faridpur district cannot be brought up to the *Sadar* station for want of easy communication. If, however, the narrow and shallow *khal* which joins the Kajli *beel* with the river Kumar be widened and deepened, and if portions of the river itself near the Munshibazâr be dredged, cargo and passenger boats may sail up to that point, and thence goods and passengers may find their way to Faridpur in bullock carts. This will soon convert Munshibazâr into an important market, and, in time, help to expand Faridpur itself into a large centre of trade, with a railway line on one side and water communication on the other.

DACCA PRAKASH,
March 20th, 1898.

32. The *Dacca Prakash* of the 20th March opposes the proposal made by the authorities of the Eastern Bengal State Railway to construct a railway line 40 miles long, between Munshiganj and Shikarpur, in the jurisdiction of thana Nawabganj, on the ground that, while it will not be of any advantage to the travelling public, it will obstruct the drainage of Munshiganj, and thus cause immense injury to the inhabitants. The writer advocates the alternative route from Dacca to Shivalay, a distance of 45 miles, as the easiest and shortest way of connecting Dacca with Calcutta. The proposed Munshiganj route will necessitate a river journey of 40 miles, as against nine miles on the other route.

(h)--General.

BURDWAN SANJIVANI,
March 15th, 1898.

33. Referring to the recent Bombay riot, the *Burdwan Sanjivani* of the 15th March writes: as follows—

The Bombay riot. The plague is doing immense injury to the people. It no doubt proves fatal in most cases, but the plague-stricken people stand in greater dread of the stringent plague regulations than of the disease itself. It is on account of the severity of plague measures that riots are taking place so often. The sedition law has been passed to restrict the liberty of the press, on the ground that the newspapers disseminate sedition and incite riots. But the newspapers are by no means seditious. Indeed, they are friends of the rulers, and their advice is always calculated to minimise danger. Unfortunately, the officials of the day are very unkind to newspapers, and that is why they have passed the Sedition Bill in the teeth of universal opposition. Owing to the drastic nature of the present law, no newspaper editor dares now to offer good advice to the authorities. If any editor in Bombay had warned the Government that mischief was brewing on account of the plague regulations, and if

the authorities had failed to take action and the riot followed, the editor would in all likelihood have been sent to jail as an instigator of the disturbance. If the authorities had taken the editor as a friend and had tried to allay the fears of the people, the evil would have been nipped in the bud. Let laws be enacted which suit the requirements and condition of the country, and let there be an end to the distrust with which the ruled are now looked upon by the rulers.

34. The *Hitavadi* of the 18th March writes as follows:—

HITAVADI,
March 18th, 1898.

The Natus. Lord George Hamilton's statements remind us of Æsop's story of the wolf and the lamb. The charges against the Natus, of which we are receiving indications, have about as much foundation as was possessed by the charges against the lamb, viz., that it had been fouling water, that it had abused the wolf six months before, and that if not the lamb itself, its father, at any rate, was an offender. We have not the courage to ask whether we shall speak out freely or in fear, but we cannot appreciate the force of the reasoning.

When the Natus were confined without a trial, everybody thought that there must be some deep reason for such confinement. We were, indeed, curious to know the cause, but thought that some dreadful secret had been brought to light by official enquiry, and that we should know it in time. When questions began to be asked on the subject in Parliament, we thought that the Natus were surely implicated in the murder of Rand and Ayerst, and that their confinement would lead to the discovery of many secrets. But nothing of this happened. The murderer was arrested and sentenced, but no trace was discovered of conspiracy or intrigue; nay, it was proved that the Natus were not even acquainted with the murderer.

Another sort of accusation is now being made against the Natus. One of the Natus is said to have forbidden a nurse to accompany the Plague Inspectors, and the other Natus is said to have spread a rumour that an English soldier had violated a woman who had been brought for segregation and who had since died. For these offences they have been imprisoned without a trial. Indeed, if anybody but the Secretary of State has assigned such a reason for the confinement of the Natus, we should hardly have credited him.

Are these the reasons why the Natus have been kept under confinement? Is conduct like this sanctioned by reason and righteousness? We have often heard it stated that the Natus have been imprisoned for State reasons. Are these State reasons? Is the regulation to be interpreted as meaning that, if anybody disapproves of the plague policy of Government or forbids anybody to serve in the Plague Committee, he shall be imprisoned without trial? Where is there a conspiracy? Is it a conspiracy to prohibit the commission of serious offences which do not come under the cognisance of the law and which, unless prevented, may bring about revolutions?

If the Natus had really spread a false rumour about the violation of a woman by a British soldier, it would not have been difficult or impossible to get them punished under the law. Was it not then very wrong to imprison them without a trial? And why should the Natus ask the police, of all people, to spread the rumour about the violation of a woman by English soldiers? Has this any look of probability about it?

Granting, for argument's sake, that the Natus really asked the police to spread such a rumour, would it not have been better by all means to prosecute them? Will anybody explain to us what harm would have resulted from their punishment after trial? Would stains have been cast on the reputation of Government if they had not been imprisoned in this way without a trial?

It appears from Lord George Hamilton's statements that he sanctioned this imprisonment with great reluctance. We cannot understand what harm he would have suffered if he had refused sanction to the course. In short, it is evident, from what has now come to light, that there was an attempt at concealment of ruth in the replies given both in the Bombay Legislative Council and in Parliament. If what we now learn be the truth, we will say that the officials could not have hit upon a better method of disgracing themselves in the eye of the civilised world. It pains one even to think that the Natus will not be released so long as the plague prevails in India.

So after all, we have this prohibiting of a nurse to serve where we expected a dreadful conspiracy like that of the Wahabis and this sending of false information to the police where we imagined a complicity in the murder of Rand and Ayerst! It is now evident that the confinement of the Natus was an act of pure despotism, and was not at all necessary. We fail to see that the Natus have committed any serious offence, or that the country, or the administration, has been improved or benefited in any way by their confinement. The officials, at whose instance they were imprisoned, are now urging pleas like *Æsop's wolf*. We, therefore, supplicate Lord Elgin, with joined hands, to consider the case in an impartial spirit and to release the Natus. If Lord Elgin interferes in the matter, instead of listening to a few Bombay officials, the reverence of the people for His Excellency will increase.

Plague has now established itself in India. There is no knowing when it will leave the country, or whether, like cholera and small-pox, it will take root in the soil. We have no hope that the Natus will be released before the plague disappears, and we are, therefore, all the more sorry. If the Natus had been tried in open court and had been allowed an opportunity of self-defence before they were imprisoned, the people would not have been so much sorry. But the Natus were not allowed such an opportunity; they were not even informed by the powerful Government of the offence they had committed. That is why the people are so much sorry for them.

35. The same paper has the following:—

It was at an unlucky moment that the plague made its appearance in India. It is ruining Indians. It has carried off hundreds of people and produced differences between Government and the people. All Indians are looking about them bewildered with fear. Fear is depicted on every countenance. Indians are not so much alarmed at the prospect of an attack of the plague, as they are alarmed by Government's plague policy. We admit that Government has adopted this policy for the good of the people. But Government should respect the ways and habits and thoughts and feelings of the people. There is a difference between the European and the Hindu or Musalman society. In the latter society there is no female liberty, and unlike a respectable European, a respectable Hindu or Musalman cannot remain in hospital with any comfort. If in consideration of such differences Government had adapted its policy to the ways and habits of the people, there would not have been this violent agitation all over the country, and men, women and children would not have deserted their homes for fear of the plague regulations, or taken a part in riots and affrays at the risk of losing their lives.

Some competent European Doctors are doubtful about the efficacy of the segregation, and segregation has hitherto proved unable to arrest the progress of the plague. Even if segregation had been indispensable, Government should have provided for it in a way which would not wound the feelings of the people. No Hindu or Musalman can bear that a male stranger should examine the person of his mother, wife, daughter or sister, or that any of them should be taken by force to a public hospital. The touching of the dead body of a Hindu or Musalman by a person of a different caste is also opposed to the practice of those communities. Rightly or wrongly, a Hindu or Musalman can easily lay down his life for his religion. If Government had acted with an eye to all this, there would not have been such a sensation, so much bloodshed, and such an estrangement of feelings between the Government and the people. We have requested Government, from the very first, to attend to these things. But Government does not trust us as it should, and from a consciousness of its own acts, always sees before it dreadful phantoms of sedition, and is imposing more and more severe laws on the loyal people.

It is a matter of rejoicing that many Europeans, too, have now discovered many defects in the plague regulations. Many of them are even requesting Government to remove those defects. We, too, request Government to see that female honour is in no way disregarded, and to thereby allay the excitement all over the country.

36. The same paper says that, notwithstanding the danger that there is in the appointment of a large number of ignorant people as Honorary Magistrates, more good than harm is likely to result from the non-appointment

HITAVADI,
March 18th, 1898.

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Pleaders as Honorary Magistrates.

of pleaders as Honorary Magistrates. It does not look well that a pleader should one day plead for a person, and another day sit in judgment upon him as a Magistrate.

37. The same paper, referring to the Plague Conference lately held in Bombay by Lord Sandhurst, remarks that it is very glad to hear the statements which His Lordship made on the occasion. If His Lordship had acted in such a discreet and sympathetic spirit from the first, such disturbances would not have taken place in the Bombay Presidency.

38. The *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 19th March writes as follows:—

The after-effects of the Bombay riot.

We do not think that it is the Bombay riot that has led Lord Sandhurst to modify his plague policy. But the Bombay Government ought to have found out its mistake earlier, and the European merchants, to whose representations this change in the Government's policy is due, ought not to have been so late in advising and counselling the Government. The Bombay Government has perhaps come to see that newspaper writings are not at all responsible for such popular outbreaks as the Bombay riot. The new sedition law has gagged the press, and has consequently put a stop to the ventilation of public grievances. Let the Government judge whether this has been for the good of the administration. It is a pity that the Government mistakes complaint for opposition, and smells show of violence in the cry of woe. But let us hope for the best. Let us hope that all will end well and the Government will at last be convinced that home-segregation is the best plague-preventive measure.

39. Referring to the plague regulations, the *Sanjivani* of the 19th March has the following:—

The plague regulations.

The Government should adopt plague measures only after mature deliberation and consultation with the leaders of the different communities. On the other hand, the people, too, should not oppose these measures without very good grounds for so doing. There would surely be no cause for anxiety or discontent if females were examined by female doctors, if the cause of death were ascertained with the help of the leaders instead of by *post mortem* examination, and if people were not indiscriminately sent to plague hospitals or segregation camps. The promulgation of plague regulations created a ferment even in Patna, and only the assurances of the Lieutenant-Governor could allay the public fear. If His Excellency the Governor of Bombay had acted a little coolly and considerately, Bombay would not have had to bewail so many catastrophes.

40. Elsewhere the same paper remarks that if all parties had kept their head cool and placed confidence in one another in checking the progress of the plague, the year 1897 would not have witnessed so many distressing sights as it did. It gratifies one to hear Lord Sandhurst speak of keeping the head cool. The strike in Bombay has ceased in consequence of the present lenient attitude of the Government, and trade has been resumed.

41. The *Som Prakash* of the 21st March says that the people of Nadia, who were very much harassed under Mr. Garrett, have been glad to have a Magistrate like Mr. Gait, as his successor. Mr. Gait is a man of an unimpeachable character and is animated by a high sense of duty. He has most of the qualities that good education bestows on man, and he has great sympathy with the Bengalis. Mr. Gait treats his subordinates very kindly, and has a true appreciation of merit. He has never, even when in a temper, been known to abuse anybody. Always anxious to preserve old monuments, he takes pains to find them out. That he is a friend of local self-government has been clearly evinced by his already appointing a non-official Chairman to a Local Board under him.

42. The *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 21st March writes as follows with reference to Lord Sandhurst's speech in the Plague Conference:—

The modification of Lord Sandhurst's plague policy.

If Lord Sandhurst had done before what he is going to do now, the Poona tragedy would not have taken place, and the prevailing panic and commotion would not have been created. The Indian

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March 18th, 1898.

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
March 19th, 1898.

SANJIVANI,
March 19th, 1898.

SANJIVANI.

SOM PRAKASH,
March 21st, 1898.

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
March 21st, 1898.

public would not have had to pass through one calamity after another if the warnings of the native press had been heard. It is the besetting fault of the European officials in this country that they have an overweening confidence in the infallibility of their judgment. It is this overweening confidence that makes them always impatient of criticism and determined to put that criticism down. It is a matter for congratulation that the Bombay Government has after all come to its senses. It would have been a great gain if this awakening had taken place a little earlier.

Lord Sandhurst's speech in the Conference of the Justices of the Peace re-assured the public, and was in every way worthy of his birth, nationality and position. Let the dead past bury its dead. Let us hope that the modification of the plague policy of the Bombay Government will allay the prevailing panic and excitement. Let us also hope that Lord Sandhurst's subordinates will act in the spirit of their chief.

III.—LEGISLATIVE.

BRDWAN SANJIVANI,
March 15th, 1898.

43. The *Burdwan Sanjivani* of the 15th March says that after all the Criminal Procedure Bill has been passed into law.

The Criminal Procedure Bill. The native members of the Council raised their voice in protest, but unfortunately their views and opinions did not receive the consideration that was shown to the words of the Law Member. It is better that the Bill has been passed considering the uncertainty in which the people were. It is the duty of the Government to administer the country well and protect the people. In this case the Government has done what it thought best. The people, too, did their duty in protesting against the measure. Whatever comes of it the Government cannot blame the press or the people for not warning it beforehand.

HITAVADI,
March 18th, 1898.

44. The *Hitavadi* of the 18th March says that the Criminal Procedure Bill has been passed into law with a few nominal amendments. The amendments proposed by the native members of the Council were all rejected, and the alarm excited by the measure in the mind of the people has not been allayed. The power of the arbitrary officers has increased, and the liberty of the people has decreased, and this is by no means a thing to be glad of.

As in England, sedition cases should have been made triable only at the sessions, for good results cannot be expected in such serious cases without jury trial.

Again, any officer specially empowered by the Supreme or the Local Government in that behalf will have the power to call upon an editor to furnish recognisance, and in default thereof, to send him to jail. There would have been some hope if Government had personally exercised this power. In the present attitude of Government, it will be difficult for editors to find sureties, and everybody connected with newspapers will have thus probably to go to jail.

It is thieves and robbers alone who are required to furnish recognisances. But thanks to the Sedition Act and the new Criminal Procedure Code, editors have now been classed with thieves and robbers against all civilised practice. Editors will now be completely at the mercy of the police and the executives. Even coughing and sneezing will now be treated as an offence, and if editors are to save their honour, they must cry "victory to huzoor" at every step. Redress must now be looked for only from England.

HITAVADI,

45. The same paper says:—Sir James Westland has tried to stop the protest against the Post Office Bill by saying that "the Government did not take any power to open a letter or a newspaper packet, but that they wanted to take the power to stop the circulation of those letters and packets which had seditious or defamatory writings on the outside."

We have no reason to suspect the motives of Sir James Westland, but in this country we find interpretation of the legislators rejected at every step by those who administer the law. We cannot understand what good will be derived from empowering the post office to stop letters and newspapers with

objectionable writings on the outside. It is ridiculous to suppose, like Sir James Westland, that anybody should address a native prince on the cover as a robber prince or insert a term of opprobrium on a cover addressed to a lady. He who wishes to defame another in a letter, will do so within the cover and not upon it. Even under the old law an Officiating Presidency Post Master tried to stop in 1890 the circulation of a monthly, the *Cosmopolitan*, because a single number of it contained an objectionable print not upon the cover but within it. If it is the intention of Government only to deal with covers that fact should be clearly stated in the proposed law.

We are not, therefore, re-assured by Sir James's words. The decision of the question whether or not any newspaper contains any objectionable print or matter should not be left to postal officers.

We cannot understand why Government is anxious to vest the post office with the power of stopping the circulation of seditious or defamatory prints. It is not unreasonable for people to feel alarmed at this anxiety of Government, as they cannot see how the law will do any good if its object be such as has been explained by Sir James Westland. We still think that the press will be gagged by means of this Post Office Bill.

46. The *Samay* of the 18th March writes as follows with reference to the passing of the Criminal Procedure Bill:—

The passing of the Criminal Procedure Bill.

What we feared has come to pass. The Criminal Procedure Bill was passed at the last

sitting of the Supreme Legislative Council. The plague has shaken the whole country to its foundation, and in places the ignorant masses have been thrown into excitement and have lost all control over their reason. How can a powerful and efficient Government like the present maintain peace and tranquillity in the country in these troublous times without taking hard and severe measures? To keep its prestige and stability intact, the Government has bound the peaceful Indian subjects with fetters of law, such as have not been forged even in the most turbulent and backward countries in the world.

Strange to say, the Government has within the space of two months passed a measure which it took it nine months to draft. The Bill was submitted to the Council at its first Calcutta sitting, was referred to the Select Committee at the second sitting and was passed at the third sitting. In a sense, however, there is nothing to wonder at in this. It is now too hot in Calcutta and the authorities are sighing for Simla. They were consequently in a hurry to pass the measure. The Governor-General, moreover, said in the Council that the Government and the Government alone was responsible for the administration of the country. This being the case, the Government did not care for the opinion of the "irresponsible" public and had the Bill rushed through the Council, the cry of the public being a cry in the wilderness.

The reader will be surprised to know that as many as 66 amendments were moved in the Bill by the official as well as the non-official members. From this it is quite clear that most of the members of the Council had objections to the drafting of the Bill, but all those objections were disposed of in ten hours and the Bill was passed.

The non-official native members calmly but firmly protested against the measure, but neither their objections nor the objections of the Bar Association of the Calcutta High Court were heard. On the other hand, most of the amendments moved by the official members were accepted. Of the amendments, moved by Sir Griffith Evans, the necessary and useful ones were all rejected. The only amendment moved by him that was passed was one which though professedly favourable to the native press, goes decidedly against it. This amendment runs as follows:—

"No proceedings shall be taken under this section against the editor, proprietor, printer or publisher of any publication registered under, or printed, or published in conformity with the rules laid down in the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, except by the order or under the authority of the Governor-General in Council, or the Local Government, or some officer empowered by the Governor-General in Council in this behalf."

The last portion of the above amendment has increased rather than diminished the severity of the original section. According to the original section only Presidency and District Magistrates had the power to proceed

SAMAY,
March 18th, 1893.

against a newspaper editor, printer, proprietor or publisher. But by virtue of the amendment even a Police Superintendent empowered by the Government on this behalf can proceed against a person connected with journalism. Sir Griffith Evans' amendment has done the native press more harm than good.

Sir James Westland successfully opposed an amendment moved by Mr. Ananda Charlu, in which it was proposed to give a person prosecuted under section 124A. of the Indian Penal Code the benefit of a trial by jury. In opposing the amendment Sir James urged that the people of this country were not, like the people of England, respectful towards judicial officers. The English people understand the law and are therefore law-abiding. But not so the Indian people. The Finance Member, we venture to say, is not quite correct. The English people obey and respect the law and the law court only so long as justice is done. But the least injustice would make them kick both the law and the law court into the Thames. And this is the case even though the British people have for Judges and Magistrates their own countrymen who are conversant with the language and the manners and customs of those upon whom they have to sit in judgment. The case is entirely different in India, but nevertheless there does not exist a more law-abiding nation on the face of earth than the Indian people. That they are much more law-abiding than the English people goes without saying. But still the criminal law in England is not so rigorous as the criminal law in India.

One word more in connection with the passing of the Criminal Procedure Bill. The manner in which some of the official members criticised Indian public opinion has pained us not a little. The Lieutenant-Governor attacked the native press and the native politician in the most unbecoming manner during the discussion on the Sedition Bill. Both during this discussion and the discussion on the Criminal Procedure Bill, Sir James Westland vented his spleen upon the opponents of the measure. Mr. James, however, beat Sir James Westland hollow in his speech during the passing of the Criminal Procedure Bill. We never dreamt that a Member of the Supreme Legislative Council could at a meeting of that Council deliver a speech couched in such coarse and vulgar language. It is evident that a free and unhampered exercise of absolute powers has spoilt the executive authorities in this country. They cannot tolerate any criticism of their conduct or patiently bear with the liberty of the critic. They have even no patience with the criticism of their conduct by the Judges of the High Court. Mr. James, in his speech, most vulgarly ridiculed the High Courts by way of giving vent to his annoyance at their independence. Do not his vulgar remarks amount to contempt of court, and cannot the High Courts teach him a sound lesson? It is a pity that the legislature has increased the powers of executive authorities of the stamp of Mr. James. The new criminal law has made the executive authorities virtually absolute and all-powerful, and it has become imperatively necessary to appeal to the British public against the high-handedness of the executive authorities.

SAMAY,
March 18th, 1898.

47. The new sedition law, observes the same paper, is much more severe than Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act. The Vernacular Press Act gagged only the vernacular papers, but the new law has gagged the entire press, vernacular as well as English.

BANGAVASI,
March 19th, 1898.

48. The *Bangavasi* of the 19th March has the following with reference to the passing of the Criminal Procedure Bill:—
The passing of the Criminal Procedure Bill. After two days' discussion the Criminal Procedure Bill has been passed in the Supreme Legislative Council. We are not the fit persons to say whether the law is good or bad. The object of the Criminal Procedure Code is to facilitate the work of administration, and its sole concern is to lay down rules for the conduct of trials and the chastisement of evil-doers. The judicial and the executive authorities and they alone are in a position to discuss the provisions of the Code and ascertain its merits and demerits. The English are the rulers of the country, and they alone understand the work of administration. Most of the high judicial officers in the country are also Englishmen, and the administration of justice is intimately connected with the executive administration of the country. This being the case, Englishmen and Englishmen alone can say whether the measure under notice is good or bad. There is one thing more to be taken

into consideration. We are a subject-people, and the object of all laws is to keep us well governed. We are, so to speak, patients and Englishmen are our doctors; we are mere children and Englishmen are our teachers; we are transgressors of the law and Englishmen are our chastisers; we are disciples and Englishmen are our preceptors. We are therefore not in a position to judge what is likely to do us good and what is calculated to do us harm. Even if we have the power to judge, we have not the right to do so. To tell the truth, Englishmen and Englishmen alone have a practical experience of administration. We do not and cannot know so well as Englishmen those defects which exist in the law and those legal quibbles which serve as loopholes for the escape of the guilty. Our knowledge of the law and law courts is derived secondhand from lawyers and their pleadings in law courts. We often boast of this knowledge upon which we base all our remarks. By sheer accident some of our remarks happen to be relevant and to the point. It is then that they are favourably considered by the authorities and we become a little inflated with vanity.

It may, of course, be asked why we deal with laws and politics if we know nothing of these subjects. The reply is not far to seek. We deal with these subjects because the Government wants us to say what we have to say, and attentively listens to what we say. Through years of practice we have contracted the bad habit of giving vent to our feelings, and our readers also have contracted the bad habit of reading our lucubrations. It is at the instance of the Government that the native press has come into existence, and it is through official encouragement that the native papers have come to freely discuss politics. This is why we have so long been in the habit of writing anything and everything in the columns of our papers without any reference to our own experience and ability, and without stopping to think whether we have the right to freely discuss politics. Our readers too, long accustomed to the perusal the political writings in newspapers, cannot now do without them, and we are consequently obliged to deal with subjects with which we have no concern and which we have no right to discuss. We never, however, dream that a perusal of our writings will ever lead the Government to change policy or bring about any modification in the administration. The British Government has never acted upon our suggestions and is never likely to do so.

One thing more. As a matter of fact, laws cannot in themselves be either good or bad. Let a law be as perfect and lenient as possible, it is sure to be rigorously executed by a high-handed and hot-tempered Magistrate. On the other hand, let a law be as rigorous as possible, it is sure to be most leniently executed by a cool-headed, affable and large-hearted Magistrate. As a matter of fact, a district is very well governed if the District Magistrate happens to be a man of good disposition, and a district is sure to fare ill, if it comes under the rule of a bad Magistrate. Let the law therefore be what it may, but let the executive authorities be all good and considerate men.

Whenever we happen to criticise a legislative enactment, it is our bad habit to take for granted that all Magistrates are tyrants, and that we are the victims of their tyranny, and that, therefore, if the law is provided with all possible safeguards, oppression will lose much of its rigour. Such a belief as this is, however, quite unfounded. The British Government never passes a law with a loophole in it for oppression. It never adopts an administrative measure with the set purpose of committing oppression. All its laws, moreover, though based upon experience acquired in this country, receive no little colour from its English associations and prejudices. Here is the difficulty. England and India are as poles asunder, and English ideas and associations bear no resemblance to Indian ideas and associations. What is looked upon as oppression in India is not looked upon as oppression in England, and *vice versa*. In manner, and customs, in language and religion, in training and education, the Indian people differ from the English people as the north pole does from the south. With all its Indian experience and with all its resolution to rule us well, the English Government cannot resist the force of national ideas and prejudices which have become firmly implanted in its mind. It cannot look upon methods and practices good in England as bad in India,

and it no doubt acts from an honest conviction when it tries to introduce English methods into India. The English Government in India is, so to speak, drawn by two forces in opposite directions, and it is this circumstance and this circumstance alone, that is at the root of all hardship, inconvenience and oppression. The laws passed by the Government are all cast in English mould, although they are drafted with a reference to the nature of the Indian people. Our strongest objection lies against the laws being thus made to go half way—against their being half English and half native. During the Musalman period, the trial of offenders was conducted on summary methods. If an accused person was found guilty by the *kazi*, he at once punished him in a summary way. The prisoner was either sentenced to whipping, or was compelled to eat rice mixed with paddy, or was done to death by being placed upon a *sul* (a tapering iron rod). The roundabout ways of English law often prove harassing and ruinous to the guilty and the innocent alike. The English law provides for an appeal against a decision and an appeal against an appeal. The new Criminal Procedure Code is objectionable in this respect. As for the increase of the powers of the executive, we need not trouble our head about that. Being the ruler, the European official is the recipient of all powers. It is therefore meaningless to speak of their being increased or curtailed. These powers can neither be curtailed nor increased. They are sometime kept in abeyance, but when the time comes, they are exercised and manifested. The Government does, and will do, whatever appears to be good in its eye. We, Hindus and Musalmans, however, like to be ruled in Hindu and Musalman ways, and this is why the new Criminal Procedure Code has not been received by us with full approbation.

BANGAVASI,
March 19th, 1898.

49. The same paper writes, as follows, with reference to the Calcutta Municipal Bill.

The Calcutta Municipal Bill.

The Calcutta Municipal Bill is as bulky as the town of Calcutta is large. The Bill is divided into many chapters, and Mr. Risley observes, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, that Calcutta is every day growing to be the first port in India, has become the abode of zamindars and millionaires, and ought to beautify the Indian Empire as the vermilion paint beautifies the forehead of a damsel. On all these considerations Englishmen and Englishmen alone, are in a position to promote its welfare and improve its sanitation. Exactly so. Being poor and helpless subjects, we are not expected to understand what is good and what is bad for the Metropolis of India. Let Englishmen beautify Calcutta as best they can. We shall live in the Metropolis if we can help it, or shall go back to our villages. From a cursory perusal of the Bill it appears that poor middle-class people will, in the future, have no chance of living in Calcutta. Let every Hindu Bengali find out his native village. So long we willingly lived away from our villages, but thanks to Mr. Risley, we shall now have to go back to them.

BANGAVASI.

50. The same paper refers to Sir James Westland's statement in the Viceregal Council that section 20 of the Post Office Bill does not apply to the contents of a postal letter

or packet, but to the wrappers of such articles. If any seditious or defamatory matter is found on the wrapper of a postal article, it shall be detained. So long there was no provision in the postal law authorizing the detention of a letter or a packet bearing seditious or defamatory matter on the wrapper. This anomaly will now be removed. Many thanks to Sir James Westland for his assurance, but it cannot but be said that a reading of the Bill does not assure one that section 20 can be interpreted in the way in which Sir James has interpreted it. It is to be hoped that the wording of the section will be so altered as to make it conformable to Sir James Westland's interpretation.

SANJIVANI,
March 19th, 1898.

51. The *Sanjivani* of the 19th March says that the recently-passed Criminal Procedure Code is a new shackle which agitation in England and not agitation in this country will even break. The object may not be gained in a day, and so preparations should be made for a systematic agitation in England.

SANJIVANI.

52. The same paper has the following, with reference to the Calcutta Municipal Bill:—

The Calcutta Municipal Bill.

What the Bill, if passed into law, will bring about, are these. The Commissioners will, henceforth, be mere ciphers who, in the

discharge of their duties, will only offend their fellow-townsmen by imposing taxes on them. The Chairman will act as arbitrarily as he pleases, without having to take the sanction of the Commissioners for what he does. The Commissioners will levy the tax and the Chairman will spend the proceeds thereof! The members of the General Committee will each get Rs. 32 for every meeting they attend, and those of Sub-Committees Rs. 16 each, provided they are not paid more than one fee in one week. So, under this rule, the members of Sub-Committees will now come to earn a pretty sum.

The impression which a perusal of the Bill leaves on one's mind is that the Government probably intends vesting all power in the Chairman and the General Committee, and that it has retained the same number of Commissioners only to avoid a public scandal. When the Government has deprived the Commissioners of almost all their powers, it might have as well abolished the rules for Ward elections, and invested the twelve members of the General Committee with those powers.

We believe that those who have any sense of self-respect in them will not come forward for election as Commissioners under the provisions of the proposed law. There will, perhaps, be no lack of persons to sit on the General Committee, considering they retain some power still and are to get Rs. 128 per mensem if they attend one meeting a week. So the best thing will be to empower the Chairman and the General Committee with the entire conduct of municipal affairs.

The provision relating to death certificates may lead to fatal results, as was the case in Bombay the other day. The corpses of Muhammadans and Parsis cannot be seen by others. The Government should now see whether, in this light, the provision in question should be retained in the Bill.

There are many things in the Bill which deserve support, but the one fact that it threatens to deprive the representatives of the rate-payers of all their power, is enough to provoke the strongest protest. The Government wants, at this late hour of the day, to prove that the Bengali is not fit to carry on municipal administration, but it forgets that it is the effort of the Bengali which has converted Calcutta from hell into heaven. When the Metropolis was in the hands of men appointed by Government, its condition was insanitary and its resources used to be frittered away on frivolities. That state of things has been changed under the rule of the elected Commissioners, and yet they are about to be shorn of their powers, which, it is proposed, should again be vested in officials. We know what the result will be. We know also that the Bill will pass through the Council, as every law is bound to pass, when most of the Councillors are officials. No one will, however, object to its passing, if the authorities are pleased to modify the Bill a little, and continue to the elected Commissioners the powers which it is proposed to take away.

53. The *Pallvati* of the 20th March says:—

The Criminal Procedure Code.

The Criminal Procedure Bill has been passed, despite protests and petitions. It is the honest conviction of every person that this measure will only serve to produce bad and injurious effects. Two weeks hence the Post Office Bill will similarly be passed much to the detriment of the cause of the country and the press. It is useless to dilate on these questions at greater length, when the Government seems inclined to lend a deaf ear to all our petitions. Our fate is now entirely in the hands of the rulers. Our Metropolitan contemporaries possess many advantages, but we in the mufassal are almost helpless. The frown of a menial of the Magistrate will be enough to send us to jail.

54. The *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 21st March has the following:—

The Calcutta Municipal Bill.

That the new Calcutta Municipal Bill will be soon passed goes without saying, and the protest of the Indian people is not likely to count for much. The plague scare, which has led to the imprisonment of Tilak, the passing of the Sedition Bill and the proposal to rebuild Bombay, is no doubt responsible for the proposed revolution in the municipal administration of Calcutta. India is closely connected with Europe by commercial ties, and Europe is putting pressure upon England to put down plague in Bombay. All the repressive measures which the Government has adopted of late, are no doubt due to the attempt to put down the outbreak of plague

PALLVATI,
March 20th, 1898.

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
March 21st, 1898.

which has thrown the British public into a panic, and this panic will in the eye of the authorities be a justification for the passing of the Municipal Bill. The Calcutta Municipal Act has been amended more than once, and the new amendment is sure to be passed. When the Act came to be amended during the rule of Sir Steuart Bayley, even that cool-headed Lieutenant-Governor treated non-official opposition with scant courtesy and said that the European community should have the upper-hand in the management of municipal affairs. If this was the opinion of cool-headed Sir Steuart Bayley, one can easily imagine what the opinion of hot tempered Sir Alexander Mackenzie is likely to be. The European residents of Calcutta are its masters, and Sir Alexander Mackenzie proposes to hand over to them the municipal administration of the metropolis. The natives will, of course, have to pay taxes, but who does not know that the belly is placed upon the legs? The European residents being the life and soul of Calcutta, the native residents will do well to leave it to them.

V.—PROSPECTS OF THE CROPS AND CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

SANJIVANI,
March 19th, 1898.

55. The *Sanjivani* of the 19th March says:—

The condition of raiyats in East Bengal. Last year the starving raiyats had to accept loans from *mahajans* at exorbitant rates of interest, varying from 75 to 150 per cent. The latter expected to realise their dues from the sale-proceeds of jute, but the jute market was very dull. What little the raiyats obtained from the sale of jute was swallowed up by the zamindar's demands, so that their debts to the *mahajans* still remain unpaid, and in a few days the heavy interest will go to swell them immoderately.

Many *mahajans* refused last year to advance money. In lieu thereof they advanced paddy at higher rates than what obtained in the market and required interest at the rate of 150 per cent. to be paid on the price of the grain supplied. The raiyats had, of course, to execute bonds to the effect that they had received cash. In one case a gentleman took some clothes and utensils on credit, as also a certain sum of money as loan from a *mahajan*. When again he stood in need of help, the *mahajan* agreed to make a further advance only when the price of the utensils and clothes was added to the principal. In another case a gentleman went to the same *mahajan* for a loan when his son lay seriously ill, in order to pay the doctor's fee. The *mahajan* refused to help him so long as he did not transfer the interest due from him to the principal account, and did not relent even when the unfortunate father was moved to tears at the gloomy prospect before him.

The raiyats have practically sold themselves to the *mahajans*, who never press for the principal, but are content to have their interest regularly. Indeed, the latter often realise interest to the extent of four or five times the original sums advanced by them, but still the debts go on bearing the same exorbitant interest as before.

There can be no doubt that under these circumstances the raiyats of East Bengal will soon be reduced to pauperism. Indeed, many are already deserting their homes.

VI.—MISCELLANEOUS.

JYOTI,
March 17th, 1898.

56. The *Jyoti* of the 17th March has the following:—

Representation of Indian grievances in England. Our prediction that the new sedition law would directly or indirectly interfere with the liberty of the press, has been fulfilled. Witness, for instance, the disappearance of the *Sahachar*. Our only hope of relief now lies in the great and liberal English public. The English are a nation of heroes and so cannot be deaf to cries of distress. They always listen to our prayers and try to remove our grievances. But we have no one to represent our cause in England. All that we need do at present is to expose our wounds to the view of Englishmen at home and pray for relief. If speakers like Surendranath, Kali Charan, Pherozechah Mehta and Parameswar Pillay could be sent out to England, we believe most of our grievances would be redressed.

57. A correspondent of the *Sanjay* of the 18th March reports the existence of a serious water-scarcity in Gopalpur, a village within the jurisdiction of Ayeenpur thana in the Faridpur district. The six or seven tanks in the village are all so shallow that they contain water for only some months in the year. At the present moment there are only two tanks which have a little water in them, but this water is so muddy and full of animalculæ as to be perfectly undrinkable. There is a *beel* at a distance of two miles and-a-half, the water of which is used by the people of the whole neighbourhood and their cattle not only for drinking, but washing, bathing and other purposes, and so is equally foul and discoloured. The population of Gopalpur numbering seven to eight hundred persons, have to depend for their water-supply on the aforesaid two tanks and the *beel*, and consequently they fall easy victims to cholera, malaria and other epidemics. Several petitions were made by the inhabitants both to the Local and District Boards and to the Faridpur Suhrid Sabha, but to no purpose. The Sabha deputed one of its members to hold a local enquiry and submitted a memorial to the District Board. All that need be done is either to reclaim one of the two tanks now in use, which happens to be centrically situated at an estimated cost of Rs. 400 or to excavate a new one at a larger cost. The people of Gopalpur are all poor, and there is none among them who can undertake this work.

SANJAY,
March 18th, 1898.

58. A correspondent of the *Hitavadi* of the 18th March says that black fever is raging at Pathuria, within the Krishnaganj subdivision of the Purnea district. It has already depopulated two or three villages and is spreading. Government is requested to attend to the matter

HITAVADI,
March 18th 1898.

Black fever in certain villages in the Purnea district.

59. The *Bangavasi* of the 19th March has the following in an article headed "The *Sahachar's* suicide":—

BANGAVASI,
March 19th, 1898.

"The *Sahachar's* suicide."

The *Sahachar* has ceased to exist after serving the public for 25 years, its conductors having willingly discontinued its publication on the ground that the new sedition law has made it impossible to conduct a newspaper. We are really very sorry at the *Sahachar's* disappearance—sorry not only for the sake of the *Sahachar* but also for the sake of the country. "To place one's dinner on the bare floor to spite the thief who has stolen the plate," is a well-known Bengali proverb. "To sink the ship in a tempestuous sea to avoid the stress of weather" is another. The stock of such proverbs is going to be enriched by a new one, and this new proverb will run thus:—"To wind up a concern for fear of the law."

In the opinion of the *Sahachar*, it is impossible to conduct a newspaper and conscientiously discharge journalistic duties without going against the new sedition law. It is impossible to obey the law if we wish to conscientiously discharge journalistic duties, and it is impossible to conscientiously discharge journalistic duties if we wish to obey the law. In our opinion, the *Sahachar* is quite mistaken. What the *Sahachar* and most of his compatriots consider to be the duties of a journalist are not in our opinion, journalistic duties at least in this country. We are sorry that a false impression like the one entertained by the *Sahachar* should lurk in the Indian public mind and should be allowed to grow and develop itself. We do not subscribe to the impression current in this country that it is the duty of a journalist to discuss politics and politics alone, to criticise Government measures and to favour the Government with advice *gratis* on all administrative questions. To tell the truth, journalism is not an indigenous institution in this country. It is an institution imported from England. We conduct newspapers simply in imitation of our rulers. We discuss politics because most of the newspapers in England largely deal with political subjects. But a little reflection would show that there is a good deal of difference between England and India. The English press exercises an almost unlimited influence in the discussion of political questions and for several reasons. One of these is that newspapers are, in England, conducted by men who are possessed of considerable ability and occupy a high position in their society. Another reason is that the English public are directly interested in the questions discussed in English newspapers and have the power to bring about an alteration or modification of public measures, or a change in the policy of the Government. In England the whole power of administration is invested

in the hands of Parliament, which consists of members elected by the English public. In other words, the people of England are collectively their own rulers. We should bear this fact in mind in order to understand the state of things in England.

But is this also the case in India? Certainly not. Most of those who conduct newspapers in this country are men who are possessed of very little ability and influence. Their resources are small, and they have no one to help them. Ninety per cent. of people in this country have nothing to do with politics. They do not understand and do not like to understand that intricate subject. They pursue their daily avocations and are thankful for the peace and tranquillity which they enjoy under British rule. They never come into touch with the Government except when they have to go to law. They do not consequently feel the importance of political discussions in the columns of newspapers. They do not take even that small interest in political discussion or in a newspaper dealing with politics which one takes in a *mela* or an operatic performance. But still we discuss politics in imitation of the press in England. English education is spreading with rapid strides in this country, and as a consequence Hindu society is fast disintegrating itself. Things have, in fact, been turned topsy-turvy. This revolution in the old order of things has no doubt benefited a few, but it has increased the number of idle and worthless people, and it is they who swell the ranks of newspaper readers in this country. The Indian press has to consult the tastes of these people.

As we have already said, 90 *per cent.* of people in this country pursue agriculture or some other avocation in life, and their business is conducted on most ancient lines. We journalists know nothing of agriculture or domestic economy, and cannot therefore presume to teach the Indian public. Of the remaining 10 *per cent.*, half are too busy to think of anything else than their daily avocations. The remaining 5 *per cent.* who consist of idle and worthless people, swell the ranks of newspaper readers, and it is for their gratification that political questions are discussed in the columns of Indian newspapers.

A little reflection would show whether or not we are telling the truth. In this country managers of theatres have, in order to please the audience, to put on the boards comic plays in the tail of heroic dramas. So also we journalists have to publish humorous articles side by side with long-winded political articles in order to make our papers sell. Just as theatre-goers, seated on cushioned or uncushioned benches complacently witness from a safe distance performances on the stage and get agreeably excited at the brandishing of wooden swords covered with glittering tin foil, even so newspaper readers in this country, sure of perfect political security, read with enthusiastic admiration, political articles published in the vernacular journals. This is why politics is so largely discussed in the columns of Indian newspapers. The supply is created by the demand and sellers have always to consult the fancies of buyers.

Discussion of politics is, moreover, a convenient occupation. A little experience, a little thinking, and you get political articles to fill column after column of your paper. One who has not to clean rice but to pound the husk need not be very much careful about handling the flail. Discussion of politics in the columns of Indian newspapers is as easy and irresponsible an occupation as the pounding of the husk. The writer of political articles in an Indian newspaper does not pay much attention to consequences. All that he cares about is the literary effect which his writings produce upon the mind of his readers.

This is newspaper politics in India. But cannot the native press eschew such politics and, at the same time, do good to the country? Is it not far better to try to do good to our society without misguiding the public by writing misleading articles and offending the Government by our political agitation? There are certainly many other things to do in society than the discussion of politics. Why, then, attach so much importance to politics, and politics alone? Why, again, all this fretting and murmuring, because we shall no longer enjoy the unrestricted freedom of discussing politics? It is our firm conviction that we can make the newspaper a useful thing in this country, without trespassing on the forbidden ground of politics.

Let us cite a few instances and recommend them to the consideration of the Indian public. We Hindus were neither ignorant nor uncivilised before

the introduction of English education. There can be no doubt that we enjoyed plenty of plain food and clothing, and the happiness of contemplating God and discussing spiritual truths. In fact, what is called in English "plain living and high thinking" was the characteristic of the Indian people of old. That we are losing this happiness with the spread of English education in the country goes without saying. It is true that new appliances have been invented for the promotion of comfort and happiness, but we cannot claim any credit for their invention. They have been invented by our rulers, and we are enjoying the benefit of these inventions along with them. But still the cry for food is growing louder and louder every day, and why? The food supply of the country has not diminished. Why, then, are a class of people virtually distracted by the care and anxiety caused by the difficulty of earning a livelihood? It is admitted on all hands that the agriculturists are thriving under British rule, and that among middle-class people many are earning money as they never did before. Why, then, this piteous cry for food? You cannot blame the policy of the Government for this, for if this cry had been due to any defect inherent in the administration, the raiyats and the middle classes would not have prospered. We should, therefore, seek elsewhere than in politics the cause of this growing want of the people. Let us give up political discussion, and try to find out the cause which lies at the root of the poverty of the Indian people.

The number of earning people is increasing in the country, but few spend money for charitable purposes. In Bengal, in this country, that is, of tanks, and wells and rivers, scarcity of water has become almost chronic. No new tanks are dug, and the old ones are silting up. Will it not be far better for us to pay attention to these things, instead of meddling with politics? The *pandits*, who of old used to propagate knowledge and remain firm and unshaken even under most disadvantageous circumstances, are becoming gradually degraded. Is this not a cause for anxiety? Will it not be better to try to improve the condition of this class of people, than to engage ourselves in the fruitless pursuit of politics?

We say, again, that the *Sahachar* has not done well by committing suicide. It has not certainly been a wise act on his part to give up doing good to his country, because he has been told to desist from work of questionable utility to the country.

60. The month of Chaitra, writes the same paper, is come, and the powerful rays of the sun are fast scorching up the soil. Impending water-scarcity in Bengal. The little water that is still left in the tanks has become foul and muddy. The thirsty Bengali will drink this water to his fill like a *pisach* (demon), and will die of cholera. When water-scarcity will be at its height, complaints will pour in from all quarters, but if all large tanks are re-excavated in time and new tanks are dug in some places, many villages can be saved. Villages have become mostly deserted. Scarcity of food has not been completely removed, and the earthquake has made hundreds of people homeless. People will simply perish, if water-scarcity is added to the burden of their misery. One may satisfy hunger by chewing grass, but one cannot assuage thirst by licking dry soil. Let every pious Bengali make some provision for water-supply in his village on the auspicious occasion of *Bishub Sankranti* (the last day of Chaitra).

61. The anniversary of the Science Association, writes the *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 20th March, comes off on Monday, the 21st instant, when the eagle of Bengal will preside over the meeting, and the jays and kites will have to welcome and worship him. Dr. Sircar, though he belongs to the community of jays and kites, will have to make preparations for the worship of the eagle. Fools as we are, we shall watch the ceremony from a distance. By the way, may not the *Sahachar's* *sradh* be performed on the day of the Science Association's anniversary? The *Sahachar*, it cannot be questioned, was a great well-wisher of the Science Association.

62. Mr. Risley, observes the same paper, is the father of the Calcutta Municipal Bill, and Sir Alexander Mackenzie cannot do without him at the present juncture. The Lieutenant-Governor is determined to immortalise his name by passing the

BANGAVARI,
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DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
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CHANDRIKA.

Calcutta Municipal Bill, even at the cost of his health. The Commissionership of Rajshahi is a small matter. Mr. Risley cannot, at present, be allowed to accept even the Governor-Generalship of Canada.

PALLIVASI,
March 20th, 1898.

63. The *Pallivasi* of the 20th March recommends Pandit Madangopal Goswami of Santipur and Pandit Ajitnath Nyayaratna of Krishnagar as two Sanskrit scholars who deserve to be honored by the Government. The fact that their claims have so long been overlooked is due either to the ignorance or the apathy of those officials whose duty it is to prepare lists of persons deserving of titles of distinction.

DAINIK-O-SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
March 22nd, 1898.

64. The *Dainik-o-Samachar Chandrika* of the 22nd March has the following with reference to Sir Alexander Mackenzie's speech in support of the Sedition Bill:—

The Lieutenant-Governor's speech in support of the Sedition Bill.

Whatever the case may be in other countries, in India, at least, there can be no rivalry between the ruler and the ruled. India differs from England in every respect—in manners and customs, in beliefs and ideas. The loyal Indian looks upon his ruler as a god, and he has naturally been painfully surprised at the scene lately enacted in the Supreme Legislative Council. It is, no doubt, a matter for congratulation that the representatives of the people maintained the dignity of their attitude, but the sorry figure which the official members, including Sir Alexander Mackenzie, cut on the occasion, has given us no little cause for surprise and disappointment. Sir Alexander Mackenzie's speech has especially cut us to the quick. His Honour conducted himself on the occasion as he never before conducted himself either in the Supreme or in the Provincial Legislative Council. We never dreamt that the man whom we regard as our king and look upon as a god would side with the other officials who are well known for their want of sympathy with the people, and would give so much proof of impatience and restlessness. The eagle should live and act as an eagle, and he ought not to have come down from his eyrie to declare a war against the jays and kites. It does not look well for the great to fight with the small. It does not become the eagle to fight with those small birds whom his very sight and voice are enough to terrify and scare away. The eagle is eagle and the kite is kite. If the eagle comes down from his high position to fight with the kite, he loses his dignity and places himself on the same level with his small enemy. The Lieutenant-Governor has committed a great mistake. He has failed to properly estimate his dignity, and has consequently failed to maintain it. There can be no comparison between him and ourselves. He is a god and we are puny mortals. He is *birat purush* and we are mere *balkhilyas*. He is a giant and we are mere dwarfs. He is our ruler and we are his subjects. He is an eagle and we are all jays. He ought not, therefore, to have ranted and blustered in the Legislative Council. The wind can shake a tree but not a mountain. It is a discredit to the mountain if it is shaken by the wind. Sir Alexander Mackenzie has discredited himself by giving proofs of irritation and annoyance. We are really very sorry for him.

As for abuse, we have long been accustomed to it. We are abused in reports and resolutions, in speeches and addresses. Sir Charles Elliott, Sir Ashley Eden, Sir Rivers Thompson, Lord Lytton and others, have abused us up hill and down dale. But we have survived all this abuse and vilification. Lytton and Eden, Thompson and Elliott, Arbuthnot and Scoble—they have all retired from the scene, and not we. Our patience is great, and there is no tiring it out. Sir Alexander Mackenzie's cutting remarks have, no doubt, pierced our heart, but has not killed it. Our heart is still firm and unshaken, and our patience still untired. Let Sir Alexander himself witness our patience and fortitude. Seated in our editorial sanctum we have kept ourselves above that impatience which got the better of His Honour's reason, even within the walls of the Council Chamber. We are really very sorry, not for ourselves but for Sir Alexander Mackenzie. We never dreamt that Sir Alexander Mackenzie, naturally so calm and dignified in his attitude, should have allowed himself to be swayed by impatience and irritation. That the ruler of seventy millions of people should allow impatience and irritation to get the better of his reason and should vilify his humble subjects in a ranting and blustering manner, is something which was never dreamt or imagined before. Let us assure His Honour, however, that his abuse and vilification has not made us love and

respect him the less. That this is the case was proved at the meeting of the Science Association where the eagle, his abuse and vilification notwithstanding, was welcomed and worshipped by the jays and kites. Has not the Lieutenant-Governor repented of his ill-advised speech? Has he now come to understand that his conduct was not eagle-like—was not worthy of a Briton, was not worthy of a man of his position? A man ought never to say anything which he may have cause to repent of. Was there any such urgent call of duty on Sir Alexander Mackenzie as impelled him to vilify us? Could he not perform his duty without taking to vilification? The Viceroy supported the Sedition Bill, but he could support it without vilifying anybody. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the *pukka* Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, could not maintain his equanimity, and failed to keep the floodgates of abuse closed, but Mr. Stevens, who once officiated for him, maintained his dignity in the speech in which he supported the Sedition Bill. Does not the comparison between Mr. Stevens and Sir Alexander Mackenzie give the former a place high above the latter?

To tell the truth, Sir Alexander Mackenzie has very much pained us. We are sorry that he shook like a tree when he ought to have remained unshaken like a mountain; that being a lion he failed to maintain his lion-like dignity; that being an eagle, he failed to conduct himself like an eagle. Could there be a greater regret than that Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the ruler of Bengal, failed to be ruler-like in his speech? In this respect Sir Antony MacDonnell compares much more favourably. It is a great pity that a man whom we have always put forward to the world as an ideal ruler, should fall so short of the ideal. The *Bangavasi* has failed to divine the cause of "the *Sahachar's* suicide". It is the unbecoming attitude of Sir Alexander Mackenzie that has, no doubt, led the *Sahachar* to commit suicide. But great indeed is our patience, that we have remained unshaken.

ASSAM PAPERS.

65. The *Paridarshak* for the second fortnight of Falgoun says that though Mr. Harward, District Judge of Sylhet, is certainly a wise and experienced judicial officer, he cannot work so hard as the District Judge of Sylhet is required to do. As a consequence of this, about 300 cases which have been closed are pending only for judgment. If, then, Mr. Harward shortly goes on six months' leave, as is rumoured, the parties to the above suits will be put to fresh expenses in having them reheard. It is to be hoped that in appointing judicial officers for Sylhet in future, the greatest care should be taken to select the most competent and hard-working men.

PARIDARSHAK,
2nd fortnight of
Falgoun 1304 B. S.

66. The same paper has received a complaint from a correspondent that Babu Sudhansu Mohan Rai, Additional Subordinate Judge of Sylhet, is in the habit of treating harshly and taunting the pleaders when they argue cases before him.

PARIDARSHAK.

67. The same paper complains that the affairs of the Assam Education Department are enveloped in deep mystery. In spite of the spread of education in Assam, teachers in the Provincial Service are recruited from a certain town on the Meghna, and the office of the Director of Public Instruction is completely closed to the men of the province. In the appointment of examiners, too, preferential consideration is not shown to qualification. The abuses were brought to the notice of the authorities by the Srihatta Sammilani, but no steps have yet been taken to check them.

PARIDARSHAK.

68. The following is quoted from the English columns of the same paper :—
Mr. Harward. "Mr. Judge Harward has been gazetted six months' furlough, Mr. Newbould, Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, being appointed to officiate for him. In many quarters the news of this change, though temporary, appears to have been welcomed with a sense of relief, and the cause of this is not far to seek. For aught we know, Mr. Harward may be possessed of ability and intelligence of a high order, but he has not so far as we are aware brought a sufficient amount of industry and activity to bear upon the performance of his onerous and responsible duties during the year and-a-half that he has been our Judge; and the result has been an amount of delay in the delivery of judgments in criminal as

PARIDARSHAK.

well as civil cases, as has never been known before, resulting in a virtual denial of justice in many cases having regard to the loss, inconvenience and indirect harassment caused to the parties thereby. The experience of the last five or six years has shown how absolutely necessary it is to have at the head of the judicial administration in this district a Judge at once capable and painstaking. Such a Judge was Mr. Kellehar, and though Mr. W. Teunon was here for a very short time and quite then new to his office, he gave universal satisfaction by the prompt and able way in which he did his work. It is indeed a pity that, on Mr. Greaves' retirement, Mr. Teunon's services could not again be obtained. But it is no use regretting what cannot be undone now. What we are concerned with at present is whether there is any real cause for complaint in regard to the way in which justice has been dispensed in Mr. Harward's court during these two years, and, if so, whether it is not desirable to place a more active and energetic man here permanently when Mr. Harward's leave expires. We have in our possession a mass of statistics relating to disposal of criminal appeals, which it would fill several of our columns to refer to in detail, but from which generally speaking, it would appear that in several instances prisoners appealing against their convictions had served out either the whole or a large part of their terms before judgments were delivered, and that it is no unusual thing for Mr. Harward to decide criminal appeals filed in one quarter in the following quarter. The truth of what we are saying will be at once apparent, if we just state what we believe to be a fact, namely that the numbers of criminal appeals and motions disposed of on the 30th December 1896 and 1897 were in each instance not less than 35, which would be nearly equal to the total number of such cases filed in any one quarter.

Coming to civil cases, we meet with a more remarkable state of things. Several cases argued to him shortly after Mr. Harward first came here as Judge were, according to our latest information, undisposed of up to Thursday last. The case valued at several thousands of rupees instituted more than two years ago by one Goluk Chandra Das, a Cachar merchant, against the Government for the recovery of the price of rations supplied during the Manipur Expedition, which was heard by Mr. Harward more than nine months ago, is yet awaiting decision, and this in spite of several reminders from Shillong. We might multiply instances. But we believe we have said enough to show that as far as the speedy disposal of cases is concerned, things have thus far fared very badly in Mr. Harward's hands, and a permanent change is for the sake of the good name of the Assam Administration as well as in the interest of the suitors urgently called for.

There is one more curious fact which we should like to notice in this connection. Mr. Harward must be possessed of superhuman memory or else one fails to see how without being in the habit of taking notes of arguments he can afford to remember, least of all, to do justice to them long, long after they are addressed to him or perhaps he can afford to do without arguments at all. But any way, the fact is significant, and we venture to appeal to the good sense of the present benevolent ruler of Assam, after such inquiry as he may be advised to order to take prompt steps to remedy a state of things which threatens to become a public scandal and should not have passed unnoticed.

Speaking of Mr. Harward personally we have nothing but words of praise, for according to all accounts his demeanour both as a Judge and as a private gentleman is extremely courteous, and he has never been known to say an offensive or insulting word to anybody.

69. The following is also quoted from the English columns of the same paper:—

Sylhet as a district of Assam.

(I)

"Now that a couple of decades have elapsed since the amalgamation of the district of Sylhet to the Province of Assam, it would not be considered too premature to take stock of the advantages or disadvantages that have accrued to this district in consequence of its separation from Bengal. It is an admitted fact that the amalgamation was determined upon only with a view to provide against the annual financial deficit caused by the actual costs of the administration of the Province being far in excess of the total revenues collected therefrom. It must also be admitted that the administration has recovered

from this financial collapse only on the strength of the immense land-revenues which Sylhet has been since contributing to the Provincial Exchequer. A mere glance over the correspondence which passed between the Government of India and the Administration of Assam on the subject would convince the casual reader that emphatic assurances were thrown out by the Government of Lord Northbrook that the advantages which Sylhet was enjoying at the time, being a member of the enlightened Province of Bengal, would remain intact, and that the judicial and revenue administration of the district would not be tampered with under any circumstances whatever. We have shown in these columns from time to time how military men are sometimes pitchforked into Judicial Benches, and how often executive functions are delegated to the hands of young and untrained Civilians, before they have had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the manners and customs of the people whom they are called upon to govern. It is often said that, in spite of large pecuniary concessions, Assam does not attract talented Civilians, who can bring to bear upon their work a sharp intellect and a ready despatch, which alone can afford satisfaction to the Government, as well as to the people at large. We publish, elsewhere, a communication, from which it will appear that there has been a tremendous accumulation of arrears in the Sylhet Judge's Court, which can be easily traced to an absence of due diligence on the part of the gentleman concerned. Even as regards the revenue administration, the natives of Sylhet have not been able to maintain their ground, inasmuch as the Assam Land and Revenue Regulations have deprived them of their special prerogatives, and brought them on the same level with the natives of Assam. It is not our purpose to dilate at length on the subject in general, but we propose to discuss, in the course of a series of articles, the prospects of the educated young men of the Surma Valley in the Public Service of the Province. We shall begin from the top of the ladder, viz., the Provincial Civil Service.

70. The same paper says that the last was the sixth Settlement of land-revenue in Jaintia since the commencement of British rule, and was necessitated by the papers of the previous Settlements having been rendered useless for want of proper care in keeping them. These repeated Settlements, combined with natural calamities, have completely ruined the people of Jaintia, which was once a flourishing country yielding rich and bumper crops.

It was due to Mr. Cotton's kindness that the date on which the new Settlement was to have taken effect was postponed for two years. It is, therefore, but just that the sale of certain estates, which were unable to pay the enhanced assessments and were therefore sold in 1896, should be set aside.

NARAYAN CHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA,

Offg. Bengali Translator.

BENGALI TRANSLATOR'S OFFICE,

The 26th March 1898.

PABIDARSHAK,
2nd fortnight of
Falgun.

